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occasion he stated that it was the "law" of the spring hunt that no one should hunt buffalo alone or in a small group, violation of which invoked the sanctions applied by the Wolf-men or Stars. However, in 1940, this same informant stated twice, explicitly, that there was no police power except at the Sacred Dances and on a third occasion in that year said: "After the Sacred Dance the company disbanded, and the chief resumed control, but he did not punish anybody for hunting buffalo alone."

In any case, authority was delegated to the companies only temporarily. Otherwise there was no agency beyond that of the family which could apply sanctions of force, and then, on only two counts. A husband had the right to take the life of an unfaithful wife; the family had the right of blood revenge in case of murder. In both, however, less extreme modes of behavior were approved and bloodshed could honorably be avoided.

When murder occurred, if the family of the murdered person could be persuaded to accept a payment of goods as restitution, further spilling of blood was prevented. It was said that the lodge of the band chief offered temporary refuge to a murderer and that sanctuary was likewise available in the lodge of the Keeper either of the Flat or of the Feathered Pipe. It was thought that if the murderer and his family, who collectively shared responsibility for the crime, could flee the scene, time would be gained for negotiating the blood-price. If one blood relative killed another, there was no retaliation, but the murderer was shunned.

While there was a considerable amount of fighting and quarreling among the Gros Ventres, especially under the influence of liquor, disputes were usually settled without bloodshed. Outright murder, as distinct from deaths attributed to witchcraft, was seemingly relatively infrequent. The following seven cases, arranged chronologically, illustrate actual behavior. Each of these was referred to independently by several different informants with a high level of agreement among them on details. The total represents all the murders that were known to have occurred in the period from about 1850 to 1885.

Case No. 1. These events took place about 1847. Two young men, who were related by blood, went on foot to steal horses from the enemy. One had obtained a fine horse, but the other had been

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682 unsuccessful. The latter, who was walking on the return journey, asked the other to lend him his horse. The owner of the horse didn't see why he should do so and the two got in a heated argument. When one reached for his knife, the other beat him to the draw and killed him. When the survivor was asked on his arrival home as to the whereabouts of his partner, he said: "I don't know where he is. I haven't seen him since we separated at such-and-such a place." Not long after that, however, when the group was traveling, they came upon the body of the murdered man. Only then did the survivor confess, but nothing was done to the murderer under the circumstances.

682 688 *Case No. 2.* Although the details leading up to this case are missing, it is known that a few years prior to 1860 a certain man stabbed and killed his son-in-law, shot his horses and burned his possessions, leaving only the lodge standing. The murdered man's brother shot and killed the murderer in retaliation. Unfortunately, however, this was not the end of the matter. The one who had avenged his brother's death was participating in a Kitfox Dance and was in the ceremonial lodge in the center of the camp circle just about to receive the pipe. At that moment, one of the company which was policing the Dance—a relative of the original murderer—shot and killed him on the spot. There was of course great confusion, and one of the chief performers in the Dance protested this act of violence which, regardless of other considerations, should never have been perpetrated during a Sacred Dance. The policing company, however, presented a united front and rode around the Kitfox lodge in the center of the circle singing: "No one say anything to us or we will shoot right now." Nevertheless the wife of the man who had just been killed ran out of her lodge, when she heard them singing, and said: "Oh I am not afraid of them. I am going to give them a tongue-lashing!" People warned her not to do so, but she called out insults at them and added, among other things: "Look at their dirty buttocks!" Several members of the company said: "Let's go over there and beat her to death," to which she boldly replied: "If you want to do it, it is all right." The chief performer in the Dance, who had protested before, spoke up again: "Now you want to do something wrong again. Why kill an old woman who is through with her life any-

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way? I warned you not to do anything. If you kill her we will not proceed with this Dance. It is a serious thing to interfere with a Sacred Dance, but if you persist we will all scatter." This appeal was effective and the Kitfox Dance was carried out without further mishap. 682 688

Case No. 3. On one occasion in about 1862, some men were drinking and two of them got in a tussle. The one who got the worse of the fight went to his brother and said: "Kill your wife. Her son [by another marriage] almost killed me. If you kill your wife, you can have one of mine." The husband took his brother at his word and went to his lodge and killed his wife, put her corpse on the fire, and heaped coals on top of it. The wife's two brothers, hearing of their sister's unjustified murder, went that night to where the men were still drinking. When the man who had originally instigated the murder saw the brothers coming closer and closer, he called out: "I don't want anyone to come any nearer or I might shoot him by mistake." But the brothers were not deterred and, approaching closer, shot and killed the man who had called out. Thus the one who had encouraged his brother in murder paid for the crime with his own life. Nevertheless his relatives mourned for him as they would have had he died under different circumstances, but they made no attempt to retaliate for his loss. 682

Case No. 4. The following incident occurred about 1865. Practically the whole tribe was camped together and there was a lot of drinking going on. A woman, crying, came in the lodge of her sister's husband. When they asked her the cause of her tears she told them that a certain man had beaten up her son and herself. Her sister's husband immediately took up his gun and went out into the night looking for that man. When he met up with him, without asking any questions except to be sure he had the right one, he shot him dead. When he returned to his lodge, his wife urged him to flee, but he refused to do so, saying: "I don't think his people will take up for him since he was in the wrong." Nevertheless several riders dashed by, shooting at the lodge but not doing any damage. The women were frightened and started running toward the chief's lodge. There was snow on the ground and they had a hard time locating it, but at last they got there and [778]

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682 [678] called out: "Our home is in trouble, we have come for protection." The chief invited them in and assured them that, while they were there, no one could harm them. But they could hear the relatives of the murdered man mourning for him. The man who had killed him continued to remain in his lodge. Evidently the male relatives of the murdered man refused to act further than merely shooting at the lodge, but finally the mother of the dead man and his father's sister, accompanied by his nephew, a boy of about ten who carried a loaded gun, came to the lodge. The women called out: "Come out here, if you are a man." They repeated this several times, but when the man failed to appear, a woman in a neighboring lodge invited them to come with her. She fed them well and eventually persuaded them to let the matter drop.

Case No. 5. These events occurred about a decade later than the preceding and details are fuller. It seems that a young man had captured a very fine horse under dangerous circumstances. He proved the horse's quality while enhancing his own prestige during subsequent encounters with the enemy. An older man, jealous of this young man who was making such a noteworthy reputation, kept pestering the young man to give his horse to him. Had the older man asked in the proper way, the younger might have acceded to his request. But the request had been made in a bullying fashion, and the older man had treated the younger as though he considered him still a child, yet the latter behaved well in simply ignoring the bully rather than answering him back.

One day, however, the older man was drunk and came up to the other, gun in hand, and said: "I am going to kill you." To which the younger man replied: "Well, be sure you do a good job of it. Be sure you don't miss me. Hit me with a bullet, because if you don't kill me, I'm going to kill you!" The older man pushed against the other's chest with his gun saying: "Well, you aren't made of rock, I can kill you," and then moving the gun near the other's head, he shot wide, intending merely to frighten him. The young man, however, did not so much as flinch, and said: "Why don't you kill me? I guess you don't want to—but be sure I'm going to kill you!" The older man said: "Oh, you are just talking!" and went into his lodge. But the young man got his gun and when his companions tried to stop him he said: "I don't want

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to do like he did and just bluff!" They let him go because they were convinced that he wouldn't go through with it. Nevertheless, he went to the older man's lodge and walked boldly up to that man and put the gun at his head. The other men in the lodge were drunk and neither they nor their host believed the younger man was really serious. The young man said: "You are not made of iron. That is the only thing a bullet will not penetrate. I am going to kill you now!" Whereupon he blew the other man's brains out.

Because that older man had been a bully and had threatened the other's life, public opinion was apparently more or less on the side of the younger man, and the relatives of the man who had been killed made no immediate move to avenge the life of their kinsman. One day, however, after a long time had elapsed, a relative of the man who had been killed was wandering around the camp circle, gun in hand and quite drunk. A companion took advantage of the situation by attempting to get rid of the young man, who had killed the older man, and whom he suspected of playing around with one of his wives. The companion reminded the drunken man that he should avenge the death of his relative, and shoot into the young man's lodge. He shot once and missed, so the companion told him to aim lower, which he did. On this second shot he hit and killed, not the young man whom they had hoped to kill, but that young man's father. Whereupon, the young man reached for his gun and was about to pursue the killer, but he was restrained by his sister and a man, who had rushed to the lodge when he heard the shots. His sister was loath to let him risk his life inasmuch as their younger brother had been killed shortly before that in an encounter with the Crow, and on that occasion the young man had had to be held forcibly to prevent his pursuing the Crow single-handed. Meantime the one who had fired into the lodge dropped his gun, and escaped on the already saddled horse of someone who had just come into camp. The companion who had incited the shots stood his ground and would almost certainly have been killed unless the sister and the other relatives of the young man had persuaded him that enough lives had been lost and to let the matter drop.

Case No. 6. On one occasion, sometime between about 1875 and 1880, a number of the bands camped together and there was a

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682 big drinking party. One man decided to quit and go to bed, so he left the others, taking a little liquor intending to save it for another time. A little later his father-in-law came to the lodge and asked him for a drink. He let him have what he had been saving and went back to bed. Soon his father-in-law returned and asked for more liquor, but the man told him quite truthfully that he had no more. His father-in-law was not satisfied but kept insisting and at last grabbed the man by the hair of the head and dragged him from his bedding. The man, who had been holding in his temper, finally lost control at this manhandling and, grabbing a knife, stabbed his father-in-law in the stomach. His father-in-law belonged to a powerful band and had many relatives who would avenge his death, so the son-in-law fled and escaped punishment.

Some time passed until this man, who had killed his father-in-law, was one evening invited to perform a cure. Before he started, the father of the sick child gave him a drink of liquor. He was just about to begin the curing ceremony when a relative of his late father-in-law entered the lodge asking for a drink. The host invited him in, but the murderer, who was a little drunk by this time, resented the intrusion and gathered up his medicines and went out. As he left, the intruder said: "Who is that leaving as I come in? You cannot budge a slick rock! (meaning that if the other were not afraid of retaliation, he would not have left)." But the murderer was insulted at this taunt. He got his gun and, sticking it in the entrance of the lodge he had just left, shot at the intruder and killed him. There was a great commotion during which the murderer's father was shot but not killed. The older brother of the intruder swore he would kill the murderer in revenge and, gun in hand, sought him out. The murderer, however, heard him coming and hid behind a tree. When the brother of the murdered man came abreast, he shot and killed him too.

The Frozens, the band to which both the recently killed men and the father-in-law had belonged, were furious at this triple loss. The murderer's band were afraid of their wrath and nearly all of them fled with him. So the Frozens killed all of the murderer's horses, tore up his lodge, and burned all of his belongings including the medicines. They were about to pursue the band which had fled and kill all of them, when Lame Bull and Big Beaver, members

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of the Upper Quarters who were not involved in this fight, stopped them and reminded them that this was a drunken fight and that the members of the two bands concerned were not really enemies. By their bravery in confronting these angry and drunken men who were armed, while they themselves were not, these two peace-makers prevented what might have turned into a "civil war." 682

Although outwardly calm reigned, tension remained high and the bands scattered in the attempt to maintain peace. A few weeks later, however, messengers were sent to all the bands to inform them that a Crazy Dance had been vowed and that all the bands must meet at a given spot and together prepare for the Dance, moving as a unit to the locale selected for the Dance. All did as directed, but the band of the medicine man, feeling the mounting tension, decided to break away from the others and left the main body the night before the tribe reached the place where the Dance was to be performed. When the company which was policing the Dance heard about the defection, they went after the band to force its return. The company caught up with this band and found the murderer sitting in the semicircle and smoking with his fellow band-members. The police called out to these men: "Don't you know it has been announced that we have to move to such-and-such a place for the Dance? That is the law. Hurry and move back!" But the recalcitrant band members paid no attention and sat with heads bowed. It so happened that a son of one of the Frozens who had been murdered was a member of the policing company. He rode up behind the murderer and shot him through the head. The other members of the police company shouted: "Let's kill them all!" and fired above their heads to further frighten them. This forced them to move back to the main body in double quick time, leaving the body of the murderer lying there. The Dance proceeded, and after it had concluded one of the Crazy Men was found with his head bashed in, but no one knew who was guilty of this crime and in any case the company had no more authority once the Dance was finished. The Frozen who had used his position as a member of the policing company to avenge his father's murder was killed in action against the enemy shortly thereafter, and so further feuding was prevented.

Case No. 7. During a drinking spree toward the end of the 682 684

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buffalo days, a certain man left his lodge to join other drinkers. When he returned he saw his wife in the arms of another man and heard her say: "I love you more than I love him." Whereupon he picked up his gun and killed the lover who happened to be the chief of his own band. He spared his wife. No attempt at revenge was made, but the murderer was looked down upon for having killed one of his own relatives.

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ing indemnity from his wife's lover and allowing her unharmed to go to him. This solution was often resorted to and in fact was the one that was urged upon both parties concerned. It was customary for the paramour to offer compensation, although an occasional individual tried to dispose of an unwanted wife with profit to himself by taking the initiative in demanding indemnity. If there were no real evidence of wrong-doing, or if the man in question wished to brave the consequences, he might refuse. One instance was given by Singer concerning a man who, returning home one night, saw a young man crouched beside the lodge. "Although he took after the young man when he ran away, he could not catch him. The next day he told one of his wives—the sister of the one whom he pretended to suspect—to take her younger sister to the young man and demand in return a gun and a horse. The elder sister took up for the younger one and refused. So the husband told his oldest wife, unrelated to the other two, to carry out his orders. This one did as she was told. When confronted by the demand, however, the young man said: 'There is no truth in it. The old man did see something that made it look bad for me, but it wasn't what he thought.' The husband did not care to force the issue, since real evidence was lacking, and that was an end to the matter." Another example shows that even when the husband had evidence of his wife's infidelity he could not always collect indemnity. The husband in question sent his wife to her lover with a long list of things which he requested in return. The paramour, who did not want the woman as his wife, refused to pay the indemnity. "Perhaps another man would have killed his wife's lover when he refused, but this one took the easier way by cutting off his wife's hair and turning her loose." In case the husband killed the paramour, it was interpreted as murder and he was subject to retaliation.

A man who kept as wife a woman known to be unfaithful to him lost status. He would be considered weak and was subject to humiliating taunts by his enemy-friends. Nevertheless some men braved adverse public opinion out of deep affection for their erring wives. While not all went so far as Sits Like A Woman, his case is an interesting one. It was related by The Boy as follows.

"The famous chief Sits Like A Woman was at the heigh of

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608 them. Crow Bull's ceremonial grandson, whom he had instructed during the Crazy Dance and who was a relative of Black Raven, heard about this and ran in front of Crow Bull, saying: "Grandfather, don't do anything," and grabbed him just when he was about to fire. So Crow Bull said: "All right, because my grandchild stopped me." Then the relatives of Black Raven collected horses and blankets and other valuables, the young man himself contributing a blanket, and they all marched to Crow Bull's lodge carrying the goods and leading the horses. On arrival at the lodge, the guilty lover went in first with the fine blanket he was giving and did a great thing. He covered White Skunk, Crow Bull's "dearly-loved child"[7] with this blanket. So Crow Bull could hardly do or say anything. He just said, "Well, I will leave it up to my son White Skunk, whatever he says, I will do." White Skunk then said: "Just give her (Iron Woman) to that man (Kitfox). Just let her go," and that is what Crow Bull did. He got all these horses and blankets and other things in payment.[8] Thus even though Crow Bull was so angry, his "grandchild" could stop him.

[586] If a woman left her husband, and her "grandfather" went to her and told her to go back to her husband for she had nothing to get mad about, she would have to do so no matter how much she dreaded it.

608 If one Gros Ventre had murdered another, and the relatives of the murdered person were afraid to approach the victim's father 682 to offer indemnity, they could offer a pipe to any one of the father's ceremonial grandfathers. If the grandfather accepted it, he prayed with it and smoked it. When the murderer's relatives were ready with horses and clothing for payment, the grandfather would lead the relatives to his grandson, the murdered person's father, and say to him: "I have brought these people who ask your forgiveness. They are bringing these horses and blankets to you. I am asking you as my 'grandchild' to accept." The father could not refuse, for if he refused, some evil would overtake him. Actually refusals to such requests by a "grandfather" did not occur, to our informants' knowledge.

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[7] For details on the dearly-loved child, see Flannery, 1941, pp. 33-37.

[8] For a discussion of indemnity in case of adultery see Flannery, 1953, pp. 185-88; for indemnity in case of murder, idem, p. 45.